BEYOND DOUBT by Noah Diestelkamp

Satan has many tools with which he tries to tempt us. One of his most often used tools is doubt. It was with doubt that he first tempted Adam and Eve – “Did God *actually* say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” (Genesis 3:1, ESV, emphasis mine) – and Satan has continued to tempt humanity toward doubt ever since. We all face doubts of some kind, but it is particularly damaging when we begin to doubt ourselves (“Will I ever be good enough?”), doubt God (“Does God *really* love me?”), and doubt our relationship with Him (“How could God use me in His kingdom?”). Knowing that we would face doubt, God preserved for us a history of His relationship with mankind – a history that we can examine to help us overcome and move beyond doubt. We will look at three of these relationships: Adam and Eve, Noah, and Abraham.

From the beginning, God *created the world perfect* (Genesis 1:31) and mankind innocent and pure (Genesis 2:25). God had a *special relationship* with Adam and Eve (e.g. walking in the garden, Gen. 3:8), allowing mankind to live in His presence. Furthermore, God *gave mankind instructions* which they were to follow (Genesis 2:15-17). Despite God’s abundant provision for them, Adam and Eve chose to be led to sin by the Serpent and, in so doing, broke their special relationship with God. As a result, God caused them to leave His presence and pronounced curses on them (Genesis 3:16-19), but He did not leave them without hope. He also cursed the Serpent (Genesis 3:14-15), promising humanity that the offspring of woman – the Son of Man – would someday crush the Serpent.

By the time of Noah, we see that the world was *full of wickedness* (Genesis 6:5-6). God called Noah out of the sinful world, initiated a *special covenant relationship* with him, and *gave him instructions* which Noah was expected to follow (Genesis 6:13-18). We see in Genesis 6:22 that Noah “did all that God commanded him” (ESV). Noah was righteous and blameless (Genesis 6:9), and his obedience led to the preservation of humanity. It was not Noah’s righteousness that saved him, however; it was God’s faithfulness to His promises. In preserving humanity, God remained faithful to His promise to crush the Serpent’s head.

In the time of Abraham, we see that the *world was still contaminated by sin* (e.g. Genesis 19). God called Abraham out from his homeland and initiated a *special covenant relationship* with him, *giving him instructions* and expectations that go with the covenant (12:1-3; 17:10-14). On inspection of Abraham’s walk with God, we see multiple times when Abraham fumbled his faith and doubted God. Twice, Abraham doubted God’s ability to protect him and lied to powerful leaders about Sarah’s identity (Genesis 12:10-20; 20). Despite Abraham’s doubt, God was faithful to protect him! In Genesis 15, Abraham expressed doubt that God would make him a great nation as he and Sarah were still childless. God’s response to Abraham’s doubt was to renew His promise to Abraham, assuring him that He would be faithful to His promises. Abraham’s doubt did not stop God from being faithful to His special covenant relationship with him.

These relationships illustrate three important characteristics of God: 1) God created the world the way He wants it to be – mankind living in the presence of God, 2) Since the fall of man, God has been working steadily towards redeeming man into His presence, and 3) God delivers on His promises. God promised to make a nation of Abraham, and He delivered on His promise! God promised to save Noah from the flood, and He (quite literally) delivered on His promise! God promised humanity that He would crush the Serpent, and He delivered on His promise in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ! In the same way, God also established a new covenant that is available to all mankind even to this day! The ongoing context for this covenant should be noted. We live in a *world full of wickedness*. Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 actions of immorality common today that do not belong to the kingdom of God. God has called us from this sin-filled world, as Paul expresses in verse 11, “Such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (ESV). God has called us to a *special covenant relationship* with Him and has *left instructions* for us in His Word with the expectation that we will follow them.

God’s new covenant has the same characteristics as God’s covenants with Abraham and Noah, and this covenant relationship is the reason we can overcome and grow beyond doubt! In establishing the new covenant through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, God publicly and unequivocally displayed that victory over the Serpent had been His all along. He was faithful to His promise! Like Abraham, we fumble our faith and are not perfect in holding up our end of the covenant, but God still supplies protection and is ready and willing to renew His covenant with us! God’s faithfulness and mercy means that in a covenant relationship with Christ, we are assured victory over the Serpent and the doubts he plants in our hearts. Doubts will arise, but through Christ we can overcome them. Doubt cannot stand long in the presence of a special covenant relationship with Christ! “Will I ever be good enough?” No, but God’s promises are not dependent on our perfection. They never have been! “Does God really love me?” Yes. God was willing to sacrifice the blood of His Son in order to establish a covenant with me in order to bring me back into His presence! “How could God use me in His kingdom?” God has a long track record of working in and through flawed people, and we are not exceptions.

This is the covenant of which we have the opportunity to be a part! By it, we can live confident of our victory in Christ because God is and always has been faithful to His promises. Overcoming doubt requires us to stop believing in ourselves and begin believing in Christ. Every day, we can confront our doubts with the truth of God’s provision for His covenant people. “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22-23, ESV). “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39, ESV). God’s love is capable of getting us beyond doubt because God's love is indeed beyond doubt. Praise God!

7421 Frankford Rd. Apt. 2833, Dallas, TX 75252; • nadiestel@gmail.com